

FINAL

COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATE/CHILDREN'S JUSTICE ACT
PROGRAM ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES

July 22, 2005

A meeting of the Advisory Committee to the Court Appointed Special Advocate and Children's Justice Act programs was held on Friday, July 22, at the Richmond Police Training Academy in Richmond.

Members Present

Fred Orelove
Sean Schwertfeger
Mike Hall
Lauren Caudill
Terica Hodge
Mindy Loiselle
Sharon England

Members not Present

Claudette Overton
Eric Olsen
Mary Evans
Kent Hymel
Ruth Stone
Honorable Phillip Wallace

DCJS Staff Present

Laurel Marks
Melissa O'Neill

Invited Guests

Nan McKenney

DCJS Staff Not Present

Holly Oehrlein

Call to Order

Fred Orelove called the meeting to order.

Introduction of New Members

Nan McKenney is representing the Virginia Department of Social Services and will also be providing the staff support for the Citizens Review Panel. She has a wealth of experience with Child Protective Services both at the state and local level having worked in Chesterfield/Colonial Heights DSS. Ms. McKenney has been the DSS VOCA grant

administrator and most recently was the Family and Children's Trust Fund Executive Director before returning to work for the Child Protective Services Unit at the State Department of Social Services.

Approval of Minutes

Fred Orelove asked if any corrections or additions needed to be made to the minutes. None being noted, Lauren Caudill moved that the minutes be approved and Sean Schwertfeger seconded the motion. The committee unanimously approved the minutes.

Election of New Officers

Nominations Committee member, Lauren Caudill recommended Mike Hall as Chair and Sharon England as Vice Chair for the next year. Both had agreed to serve if elected. A motion was made to accept the slate and was unanimously approved.

Mike Hall began his tenure as the Chair of the Advisory Committee and expressed appreciation to Fred Orelove for his leadership to group for the past several years. The other members present echoed this sentiment.

Citizens Review Panel

The Advisory Committee was provided information on the implementation of the Differential Response System. Copies of a report were distributed. Ms. McKenney stated that the work that the CASA/CJA Advisory Committee did as a CRP on the co-occurrence of domestic violence and child abuse was excellent and she would like to see similar results from efforts put forth on DRS implementation. Strategies were discussed on how to assist the Advisory Committee in accomplishing this goal. First, in order to educate the members on the status of implementation to date, the most recent report was distributed. She is now the designated person in the unit to work with Virginia Tech to help with the evaluation and prepare reports for the General Assembly. Her proposal was to hand out the report, then next time have more discussion about the evaluation as they're finalizing the report to go to the General Assembly.

A discussion was held on the proposed changes to CPS Regulations. Copies were provided to Committee members. Ms. McKenney gave an overview of the proposed changes and invited members to direct comments to the Department of Social Services during the formal 60-day public comment period. Ms. McKenney will be the staff assigned to receive public comments for the Department.

The Child Advocacy Centers received a state appropriation this past year and the Requests for Proposals will be administered by the Secretary of Health and Human Services. Ms. McKenney is providing leadership on this project as well. Proposals are due August 8 and the review panel will meet August 19th. The contracts will begin September 1 and will extend through June 30, 2006 with a possibility of continuation awards should money continue to be available.

CASA Program Update

The Goochland CASA Program began operations in the spring of 2005 bringing the total number of programs serving children in the state to 28.

DCJS participated in the State Directors Meeting and NCASAA Conference in Atlanta held in April. DCJS was also invited to send two local program representatives to a "Training of Facilitators" workshop for the NCASAA Volunteer Curriculum. This training occurred prior to the NCASAA Conference. A representative from each of the newest programs in the state was able to attend (Goochland and Isle of Wight).

DCJS was invited to submit a NCASAA Resource Development Grant (\$50,000) for the purpose of building capacity among the network of local programs statewide. Upon completion of a survey of the local programs, the grant was written to provide statewide training on fund development with an emphasis on diversifying local funding bases. DCJS will be contracting with a consultant to provide these services. Advisory Committee members provided suggestions on potential resources for DCJS to consider.

There was a task force of local program directors who met to try and make recommendations to DCJS regarding the current funding formula that is used to disperse the state appropriation. This group has met for approximately one year. The outcome of the work of this group was that there was not consensus on a final recommendation to DCJS. However, there were many positive lessons that could be gleaned from the process. DCJS is going to take the information that the task force compiled and attempt to provide additional input for the Network to consider.

The DCJS grants to local programs were successfully awarded to 28 local CASA programs for FY06. The amount that was appropriated to CASA programs was \$975,000.

DCJS completed the Self Assessment for State Organizations Pilot Tool for NCASAA. Since it was a "Pilot" test tool, it was not necessary to involve members of the Advisory Committee at this juncture. However, the Advisory Committee membership will most likely have a role to play in the process when DCJS is required to complete the final Self Assessment for State Organizations.

Distributed Nelson v. Petersburg DSS Court of Appeals opinion (unpublished opinion). There was a discussion regarding the impact of this case on the Advisory Committee's prior Guidance Policy on the use of CASA Volunteers in Circuit Court. The discussion determined that the Guidance Policy, which states that CASA Volunteers should be reappointed at the Circuit Court on cases that are appealed still stands. Further, it was suggested that it would be best practice if the Guardian ad litem would file the motion to reappoint the CASA Volunteer. This will be explored with the Court Improvement Program for possible inclusion in recommendations regarding CASA.

A discussion was held regarding the reduction in the increase in the number of children that CASA programs serve each year. Typically, the number will increase by approximately 300 children and in FY04 the number increased by about 150. Committee members provided input and feedback on how to solicit information from local programs via a survey to gain insight as to why this number may be changing. This survey will be developed once the FY05 Annual Report is compiled.

Children's Justice Act Update

The CJA Grant Application was submitted in June 2005. It will likely be a couple of months before we are notified of the grant award.

The "Investigating and Prosecuting Serious Injury and Fatal Child Abuse" conference was held on Monday and Tuesday of this week, July 18 & 19, 2005. There were 154 professionals registered for the conference. Evaluations have not been summarized yet but a cursory review indicates that most sessions were well received.

The contract for Finding Words Virginia has been finalized. DCJS has already begun monthly teleconferences with APRI staff. Space has been secured at VCU to conduct three weeklong training sessions in 2006. The VCU Child Development center has agreed to provide children for the child interview component of the program. Training space on the VCU campus was selected because of its proximity to the children. Due to our agency's move, a site visit to the space had to be postponed.

Forms to be used during the Finding Words Virginia training (e.g. Release forms to allow videotapes of child interviews to be shown during training) were submitted to the Attorney General's and were approved for use.

Localities must sign up to attend Finding Words Virginia as a multidisciplinary team. We will be holding a one-day training program on "Developing a Multidisciplinary Child Abuse Team" on August 29th at Longwood University. We have identified localities that are not using a multidisciplinary approach to investigate child abuse cases and will be targeting them for the training. There will be NO COST to attend, however, seating is limited to 30-40 people. The trainer is Jodi Lashley from CornerHouse (CAC) in Minnesota.

The second "Improving Investigation and Prosecution of Child Abuse" conference will be October 20 & 21, 2005 in Williamsburg, VA. The cost to attend is \$20 if participants register online & \$25 if they mail their registrations.

We have also scheduled the three-day "Child Abuse Seminar" offered by John Reid and Associates on November 1-3, 2005 in Charlottesville, VA. The cost to attend is \$200/person.

The CJA Program has also set aside \$16,000 for fiscal year 2005-2006 for a scholarship fund that enables professionals to attend national level training programs. Jurisdictions are limited to a maximum award of \$2,000 that is available on a reimbursement basis.

The CJA Program Coordinator has been actively involved with a committee coordinated by the Secretary of Health and Human Resources to distribute one million dollars that the General Assembly appropriated for the expansion of Child Advocacy Centers in Virginia.

Finally, the CJA Program Coordinator has been working with staff at the Partnership for People with Disabilities to support some research studies related to the "Abuse and Neglect of Children with Disabilities" curriculum that may result in revision of the course offering.

Schedule Next Year's Meeting Dates

The following dates were selected for the CASA/CJA Advisory Committee meetings and will be held at the Richmond Police Training Academy unless otherwise noted on meeting notices:

October 6, 2005
January 20, 2006
April 28, 2006
July 21, 2006

New Business

Mindy Loiselle would like to brief the Advisory Committee on the subject of Child Trafficking in Virginia at the next meeting.

Fred Orelove provided the members with information about the "New Voices" conference that will take place on October 6 & 7, 2005. This conference will focus on individuals with significant developmental disabilities around the state that have not had a voice and to bring them together for networking around the areas of housing, employment, personal care and education. The conference will be held at the Marriott in Richmond. Members are invited to attend if they wish.

Paul Hershbiel submitted a letter of resignation from the Advisory Committee citing competing time commitments and responsibilities. Discussion was held regarding the membership needs of the Committee that are currently vacant. Committee members provided feedback on potential members to fill vacancies.

Adjourn

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 1:04 p.m.